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Thesis

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS IN MODERN DRAMA

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OUTLINE.

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SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS IN THE MODERN DRAMA

To anyone who is even slightly interested in the trend of modern drama, it is unnecessary to point out the fact that social themes are the vogue of the day. The stage has been converted into a veritable laboratory into which many types of social problems have been taken for analysis and solution. Conservative records indicate that at least three-fourths of the drama successes of the New York stage during the past twelve months have presented a definite social question. Of thirty-five dramas played in Boston in the last six months, twenty-three ~~of them~~ have been of a social nature. A perusal of the drama section of any city newspaper will give ready evidence that the stage is extensively concerning itself with social plays. The sociologist and the social scientist can therefore afford to give a thought to modern drama. It is well to know what the folk over the footlights are saying and teaching about marriage, divorce, capital, labor, and the many other social subjects with which they are dealing.

What is the social drama? It will be well to define the term, for it is liable to lose meaning through generalization. Superficially classified, any drama is social; it is social because it involves a relationship between the people who perform the play and the people who see it. The social drama, however, has a more specific meaning in its use as the basis

for this thesis. Social dramas herein are limited to those plays which present some very definite problem which society faces. The problem is given primary position. To explain further by example, both Noel Coward's English farce, "Hay Fever," and Henrik Ibsen's so-called comedy-drama, "The Wild Duck," are built upon family life. "Hay Fever" uses the family merely as a setting for farcical situations which can easily exist without the family setting. "The Wild Duck," however, uses the family as an end in itself, an end which presents a fundamental and serious problem of society. "Hay Fever" is therefore not to be considered as a social play, while "The Wild Duck" is essentially a social play.

The fore-going illustrations should not be misconstrued in furnishing a criterion for determining whether a play is social. "The Wild Duck" is serious, and "Hay Fever" is farcical; yet this difference has no bearing in the matter. A social play need not be serious; indeed, it may be comic and even farcical in dealing with a serious problem of society. For instance, James A. Barrie's play, "What Every Woman Knows" is decidedly humorous in its treatment of a serious social consideration; namely, it deals with the relationship between husband and wife. It contrasts and pits the wisdom of a woman against the unaware innocence of a man in a good-natured and whimsical fashion, but yet contains a serious aspect of the problem of feminism. "What Every Woman Knows" is therefore

to be included in the category of social plays.

What has given rise to the social trend of modern drama? While it is impossible to give a simple, precise answer to this pertinent question, there are at least two underlying reasons for this social emphasis. In the first place, the paramount object of the drama is to mirror life; the more vibrant and pulsating with human elements a play is made, the better chances it has for being well received by the people. Dramas built upon themes too foreign and too fantastic to come within the range of human experience seldom succeed. The drama strives to present the possible thoughts, the possible actions, the possible problems of life. People want to see themselves, as they are or want to be, on the stage. Miss Jane Addams recognized this fact when she recently said: "In moments of moral crisis now the great theater-going public turns to the sayings of the hero who found himself in a similar plight. The sayings may not be profound, but they are at least applicable to conduct."[1]

Social questions are looming high in public interest these days. People are discussing the social evils of the time as never before. Sociology is a flourishing study in educational institutions, churches are giving their attention to social problems, the press is discussing social

(1) Henderson, Archibald, The Changing Drama, (New York, Holt, 1914), p. 17.

matters; in short, social considerations are occupying a large and growing part of people's interest and activity. Since the drama does endeavor to mirror life, it is quite natural, then, that these social questions are popular with the modern stage.

Another fundamental reason for the social trend of the drama is that the writers of it are using the stage as their pulpit, their soap-box. Many of the modern dramatists - notably Ibsen, Shaw, Galsworthy, Brieux, Pinero, Hauptmann, and others - have a social message to give; so they use the stage for their spokesman. The general attitude of this class of dramatists is represented by Brieux when he confessed:

> "It is my nature to preach..... I have always wanted to preach. My plays all have a purpose. That is why I write them. Had I lived in the seventeenth century, I would have been a preacher. Then the Church wielded an enormous influence. But now, I write plays. The theater is what attracts people; there you can get them. And I want to bring the problems before them. I want them to think about some of the problems of life..... I have tried to show how wrong it is to shirk responsibility. All evil comes from the lack of responsibility - of the individual for the individual, and of the class for each other."[1]

Ibsen may properly be called the father of the social drama. A critic has commented that the art of Ibsen and his followers has thrown open the doors to a new domain:

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(1) Henderson, Archibald, The Changing Drama, (New York, Holt, 1914), p. 89.

this is the domain of social ethics. Another critic has observed that modern drama has become the means of evoking the social consciousness and awakening the social conscience.

The following chapters of this thesis present some of the important social implications of the modern drama. The method will be flexible, but in general will deal with the outstanding social dramas, their substance, the purpose of their authors, their relationship and comparison with other dramas of similar type.

CHAPTER ONE

PROBLEMS IN FAMILY LIFE

CHAPTER ONE.

The Relationship between Husband and Wife.

Of all the social themes upon which the modern drama is constructed, those dealing with the various relationships between husband and wife are probably the most common. Indeed, the stage of today has presented so many dramas about husband and wife that it would be quite impossible to treat this problem exhaustively in a thesis of this character.

Yet it is a comparatively recent theme for the playwright. It was first introduced in the "bourgeois drama" of the eighteenth century, and then first studied in its detail by Henrik Ibsen. In dealing with this social problem - and in dealing with all other social problems in these pages - the task will be to select as examples the dramas which most faithfully represent the many similar presentations of the problem at hand.

The outline indicates that several phases of this relationship between husband and wife will be treated in this chapter. Obviously, these phases merge into each other; that is, marriage and feminism, or the eternal triangle and divorce, may have much common ground in the same drama. Here the task will be to choose as examples those dramas which least confuse the several phases and which sound their dominant note under the particular heading which is being given consideration.

Marriage is presented on the stage in its one extreme

to its other: as a most undesirable and unsuccessful institution to the other extreme of being nearly a never-ceasing honey-moon. The trend appears to be in the direction of a pessimism and of a dissatisfaction with the existing conceptions of marriage. A spirit of criticism and revolt is in the foreground. There are two general groups of dramas dealing with marriage; the one depicts marital disasters, and the other one depicts marital adjustments. That the joy and harmony in marriage are less frequently presented on the stage may be due in part to the fact that the drama can arise only from a conflict of forces.[1]

Ibsen will be given fuller attention under the heading of feminism, but his criticism of marriage is worth noting at this point. He wrote: "Free-born men is a mere flowery phrase. There aren't any. Marriage, the relation between man and woman, has destroyed the race, has fixed upon every one the marks of slavery." It was around this epigram that he built the plot of "The Doll's House." His idea of freedom is found in "The Lady from the Sea," in which the statement is made: "Freedom consists in securing for the individual the right to free himself - everyone according to his needs." Ibsen, of course, contended that marriage violated this right. It is in his "Ghosts," however, that he most vividly showed the tyranny of the institution of marriage.

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(1) Chandler, Frank W., Aspects of Modern Drama, (New York, MacMillan, 1924), Page 170.

Emma Goldman has remarked in this connection: "More than any other play, "Ghosts" has acted like a bomb explosion, shaking the social structure to its very foundation."

Mrs. Alving married Captain Alving only to discover she had joined her life with a mental and physical wreck; life with him would mean degradation and be fatal to possible offspring. She turned to her companion of earlier days, Pastor Manders. But Pastor Manders was indifferent to earthly necessities; his work, he thought, was to save souls for heaven. Accordingly, he advised Mrs. Alving to remain faithful to her duties to home and husband - to shame and degradation. Manders considered happiness but an unholy manifestation of a rebellious spirit; a wife's duty was not to judge, but "to bear with humility the cross which a higher power had for your good laid upon you."

For twenty-six long years Mrs. Alving bore this cross. She bore it for her little son, Oswald; she wanted to save him from the contaminating atmosphere of her husband's home. For Oswald's sake, too, she shielded the truth of the father's degradation; rather, she impressed him of his father's goodness. She learned the bitter truth, however, that Oswald was doomed to suffer the sin of his father. The irony of the truth is pitifully shown in Oswald's lament of his condition: "If it had only been something inherited - something one wasn't responsible for."

Mrs. Alving learned the hard truth, too, that "we are all of us ghosts. It is not only what we have inherited from our

father and mother that walks in us. It is all sorts of dead ideas and lifeless old beliefs. They have no vitality, but they cling to us all the same and we can't rid ourselves of them..... And then we are, one and all, so pitifully afraid of light. When you forced me under the yoke you called Duty and Obligation; when you praised as right and proper what my whole soul rebelled against as something loathsome; it was then I began to look into the seams of your doctrine. I only wished to pick at a single knot, but when I had got that undone, the whole thing ravelled out. And then I understood that it was all machine-sewn."

Ibsen fully realized that "Ghosts" constituted a challenge to the conservative forces of organized society in his treatment of marriage. "It may well be that the play is in several respects rather daring," he wrote to a Danish newspaper editor about a month after its appearance: "But it seemed to me that the time had come when some boundary-posts required to be moved."

Sir Arthur Wing Pinero has treated the marriage problem in several of his most outstanding dramas. "'The Second Mrs. Tanqueray' produced in 1893 has been rated the most significant English play in a hundred years,"[1] and this great drama is constructed around the problem of marriage. Specifically, it asks the question if marriage can clothe with respectability the woman who has earlier sinned. The answer is negative.

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(1) Drury, Francis K. W., Viewpoints in Modern Drama, (Chicago, American Library Assoc., 1925), Preface.

Aubrey Tanqueray, however, believed that marriage can redeem a woman who has earlier sinned. He married the beautiful, but once disreputable, Mrs. Paula Jarman. Misery resulted in short time. Aubrey's daughter, Ellean, had a distinct aversion to her step-mother. Moreover, society had nothing to do with the Second Mrs. Tanqueray. The only woman who did call came to take Ellean on a trip abroad so that the girl would not be in contact with Paula. Paula found that it was hard to shake off her earlier habits and attitudes of life. Ellean returned from Paris, bringing a lover with her. It proved to be Captain Ardale, Paula's own unheroic first lover. Tanqueray was ignorant of her alliance with Ardale, but encouraged her to consider a rosy future when he had learned the truth. Paula realized that her future would be in the form of "A worn-out creature... my hair bright, my eyes dull, my cheeks raddled and ruddled - a ghost, a wreck, a caricature, a candle that gutters, call such an end what you like!"[1] With this, she ran out, and Ellean shortly came in with the announcement that Paula had killed herself.

"Mid-Channel" is another of Pinero's dramas which deals with the marriage question. This time he shows the perils of middle life for the married, aptly illustrating how and why the middle-aged drift apart.[2] The theme is artistically compared to crossing the English Channel with its shoals about

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(1) Dickinson, T. H., Chief Contemporary Dramatists, (Boston, 1894).
(2) Chandler, Frank W., Aspects of Modern Drama, (New York, MacMillan, 1924), pp. 174-175.

half way across it. "The happiest and luckiest of married couples have got to cross that wretched Ridge," philosophized Peter Mottram, the good-hearted vulgarian; "a bad time it is and must be - a time when travellin' companions see nothing but the spots on each other's yellow faces, and when innoomerable kind words and innoomerable kind acts are clean forgotten. But, as I tell you, it's soon over - well over, if only Mr. Jack and Mrs. Jill will understand the situation; if they'll only say to themselves, 'We're on the Ridge; we're in mid-Channel; in another quarter of an hour the boat'll be steady again.'"

Blundell and Zoe, however, never found their matrimonial boat steady again after their first thirteen years of married life. The husband evaded the burden of children and became more selfish and dissatisfied each day. The wife was shallow, also selfish and dissatisfied, and found vapid excitement in the company of harmless men admirers. The two finally quarrelled, and Zoe left for the Continent with one of her admirers. Blundell found temporary consolation in a mercenary woman who soon disgusted him.

Mottram made an attempt at reconciliation. Zoe was ready to forget and forgive her husband's entanglement. Blundell refused to forgive her for her entanglement, but agreed to give her a divorce if her admirer will marry her. Zoe had already dismissed her lover and had encouraged him to renew his relations with a girl long in love with him; so Zoe lost both husband and lover. When the latter realized her situation

he offered to break his engagement with his girl and come to her rescue, but Zoe refused to let him make the sacrifice. As she turned to leave him, Blundell pounded at the door. The husband and erstwhile lover renewed their altercation, and Zoe leaped to her death from the window of an adjoining room during their quarrel.

One is impressed with the easiness and naturalness by which the two came upon the shoals of married life. In a rash and spiteful moment, Blundell made a fool of himself with Mrs. Annerley. He would not return to Zoe because she would laugh at him. "You see, I always posed to her as being strong, rather cold-blooded," he said. "It was more than a pose - I thought I was a strong man. And then - to crawl back to her - all over mud!"[1] Zoe merely dallied with her admirers to escape the tedium of her husband's indifference and grumbling. Yet she never dreamed of ultimate disloyalty; she became disloyal through force of circumstance.

Pinero, as an heir to the old bourgeois school of dramatists, wants to drive home a moral.[2] In "Mid-Channel", he shows the tragedy of a childless home. He puts his convictions into the mouth of Zoe who says, in discussing the mess they have made of marriage: "it was doomed from the moment we agreed that we'd never be encumbered in our career with any -

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(1) Pinero, Arthur W., Mid-Channel, (Boston, Baker, 1910), pp. 26-27.
(2) Chandler, Frank W., Aspects of Modern Drama, (New York, MacMillan, 1924), pp. 175-176.

brats of children..... Oh, yes, we were happy in those climbing days....; but we didn't look to the time when we should need another interest in life to bind us together..... Ah, Theo, I believe we should have crossed the Ridge safely enough but for our cursed, cursed selfishness!"

In "The Profligate", Pinero gives us a less horrible play about marriage. He portrays the power of a good woman to uplift a man and the retribution which comes from leading a dissolute life. While the play is not one of Pinero's best, it does present a convincing argument about marriage.

Eugene Brieux has also shown an interest in the problems of married life. "The Three Daughters of M. Dupont" is perhaps one of his best-known plays.[1] The three daughters are Caroline, Julie, and Angele. Caroline is an old maid and a pious Catholic. Julie, when the plays begins, is about to be betrothed to Antonin Mairant, a youth of the town. M. amd Mme. Dupont pay their ceremonial call upon M. and Mme. Mairant, and the four parents haggle about the marriage portion. They manage to swindle each other to perfection. But Julie, once married, proves intractable. She wants children, and Antonin will not consent to her requests. Moreover, the mutual fraud in the matter of dowry is revealed. Antonin treats the fraud cynically, and Julie insists more strongly than ever upon her claims to motherhood, to equality, and to respect. She has not married him to be his slave, and she insists upon her rights as an individual.

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(1) Brieux, Eugene, The Three Daughters of M. Dupont, (New York, Scribner's, 1911).

Caroline wants to be married. She and Angele inherit a small legacy between them. Caroline gives her share of it to her father's clerk, hoping he will come to her rescue. Unfortunately for her, he has been in love with another for a long time. Angele, the victim of an early seduction, comes home. She impresses M. and Mme. Dupont by her evident prosperity. Julie revolts against Antonin, but is finally urged by her sisters to return to him. She does so, telling him: "I had romantic ideas; I saw marriage as it is not. Now I understand it. In life, it is necessary to make concessions."

Brieux is not attacking marriage, but marriage of convenience. He is aiming at the evil of marriage for money, not for love. But he insists that the marriage, once made, must continue. He revolts against the social custom in which parents, with an eye to property profit alone, sacrifice the higher interests of the children they force into marriage.

August Strindberg's play, "The Father,"[1] deals with a marriage which would have promptly been annulled had it not been for a child that bound the father and mother together. A dispute arises between them as to whether the child, Bertha, shall go to a conservative school of the mother's choice, or to a school of a free-thinker of the father's choice.[2] When the father asserts his paternal right to send Bertha where he chooses, the mother hints that Bertha is not his daughter.

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(1) Strindberg, August, The Father, (London, Duckworth, 1907)
(2) Chandler, Frank, W., The Aspects of Modern Drama, (New York, MacMillan, 1924), pp. 297-298.

She also does all she can to make him appear insane, and accumulates proofs of his insanity which she presents to the board of lunacy. In a temper caused by her taunts, he throws a lighted lamp at her, thus confirming people's belief that he is mad. Finally, the nursemaid of Bertha puts him into a strait-jacket. Here he can do nothing but pour out his hatred of women in Strindbergian fashion. He expresses his hate for his mother who brought him forth unwillingly; his sister, who ruled him when he was a child; the first woman he embraced, who exchanged his love for disease; his daughter, who preferred her mother to him; and his wife, who has been his worst enemy.

In St. John G. Ervine's success, "Jane Clegg", we have another picture of unhappy married life; this time the wife is the object of sympathy. The play deals with the long-suffering woman who is forced to live with her contemptible husband, but finally dismisses him from her life.

George Bernard Shaw has had a great deal to say about marriage in his satirical, but thought-provoking, dramas of social problems. To mention Shaw is to be tempted to devote the remainder of the thesis to him and his plays. However, we can only concern ourselves in these pages with his particular contribution to the modern social drama. Ashley Dukes says: "Bernard Shaw, judged by his works as a whole, is the greatest individual force in modern drama."[1]

(1) Dukes, Ashley, Modern Dramatists, (Chicago, Sergel, 1913), p. 125.

On the other hand, there are those who insist that Shaw is out of touch with real public opinion, and therefore is no accurate critic of contemporary society. With regard to marriage as an institution, Shaw takes the more scientific point of view. He holds that marriage is a convention, quite necessary for practical purposes, but to be regarded for just what it is worth. A marriage in itself counts for little, when love - a spiritual bond - no longer holds the husband and wife together. We find this attitude of Shaw expressed in his play, "Candida" (which will be treated at length in another connection later on). Candida tells her husband, to whom she is devoted, that his confidence in her purity and goodness is misplaced. She says: "Ah, James, how little you understand me, to talk of your confidence in my purity and goodness. I would give them both to poor Eugene as willingly as I would give my shawl to a beggar dying of cold, if there were nothing else to restrain me. Put your trust in my love for you, James, for if that went, I should care very little for your sermons - mere phrases that you cheat yourself and others with every day."[1] Candida, then, is controlled by love, rather than by a respect for something more abstract and institutional. In a letter to Huneker, Shaw said of Candida that "She is straight for natural reasons, not for conventional ethical ones."[2]

(1) Shaw, George Bernard, Candida, New York, Brentano, 1913.
(2) Chandler, Frank, Aspects of Modern Drama, New York, MacMillan, 1924, pp. 413-414.

In his "Getting Married," Shaw again attacks marriage as an institution. In the words of his Mrs. Bridgenorth, we have the argument: "But, bless me! marriage is not a question of law, is it? Have you children no affection for one another? Surely that's enough."

"If it's enough," retorts the lover; "why get married?"[1]

Yet it would be unfair to Shaw to leave him with having given the impression that he is opposed to marriage in general. He admits that monogamous marriage is the best system that society can have. We find Collins, the grocer in "Getting Married," remarking jovially: "Marriage is tolerable enough in its way if you're easy going and don't expect too much from it. But it doesn't bear thinking about. The great thing is to get the young people tied up before they know what they're letting themselves in for."[2] Contrast with this, Ibsen's "Love's Comedy" in which he argues for a rational marriage as opposed to a marriage of inclination.[3]

Shaw has not been entirely iconoclastic in the matter of marriage, contrary to popular belief. His play, "You Never Can Tell," reveals the more optimistic, and less satirical, conviction that marriage is commendable in spite of its failings. William, the waiter, philosophizes: "Every man is frightened by marriage when it comes to the point; but it often turns out very comfortable, very enjoyable, and happy indeed, sir - from time to time. I never was master in my own house, sir....But if I had

(1) Shaw, George Bernard, Getting Married, New York, Brentano, 1911, pp. 47-48.
(2) Ibid, pp. 65.
(3) Ibsen, Henrik, Love's Comedy, New York, Scribner's, 1900.

my life to live over, I'd do it again, I'd do it again, I assure you. You never can tell, sir; you never can tell."

Shaw also holds up for a target of his satire those who rant on about marriage being slavery, yet insist upon being married when they themselves fall in love. We find this theme developed in his play, "The Philanderer." Julia Craven has faded in the mind of Charteris, the Philanderer, when he becomes infatuated with another woman. He criticizes Julia for being inconsistent by not holding to her modern views when she faces the situation. "As a woman of advanced views," he complains, " you were determined to be free. You regarded marriage as a degrading bargain, by which a woman sold herself to a man for the social status of a wife and the right to be supported and pensioned in old age out of his income. That's the advanced view - our view."[1] He argues in vain with her, however, for now that Charteris is interested in a newer love, Julia wants to be married to him in the conventional, if older fa shioned, way. Shaw has commented upon "The Philanderer" in this manner: "I have shewn the grotesque relations between men and women which have arisen under marriage laws which represent to some of us a political necessity.... to some a divine ordinance, to some a romantic ideal, to some a domestic profession for women, and to some that worst of blundering abominations, an institution which society has outgrown but not modified, and which 'advanced' individuals are therefore to evade."[2]

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(1) Shaw, George Bernard, The Philanderer, "Plays: Pleasant and Unpleasant" vol. 1., New York, Brentano, 1909.
(2) Chandler, Frank W., Aspects of Modern Drama, New York, MacMillan, 1924, p. 415.

Turning from the more tragic and pessimistic presentations of the problem of marriage, we discover that the modern theater is also treating the matter in lighter and more optimistic vein; indeed, some of the most popular comedies of the past few decades have had marriage for their theme. Unfortunately, many of the comedies dealing with this problem have degenerated into suggestive, risqué, and immoral treatment. The immoral presentation of moral and social problems is a subject for another thesis, however, and cannot be given consideration in these pages. Happily for our thesis at hand, there are many healthy and moral comedies of marriage which do have definite social implications.

Probably one of the most popular comedies of marriage presented to the public within the last few years is "Dulcy" - the success by G. S. Kaufman and Marc Connelly.[1] It is a delightful play which depicts the enduring love between a young and aspiring business man and his flapper wife whose devotion to her husband frequently exceeds her judgment and wisdom. Marriage is presented as an amusing, but very much worth while, venture. Tarkington has inimitably expressed the gist of "Dulcy": "There is no 'sex' in it, no 'surge of passion,' no 'conflict of big, primal forces.'" In "To the Ladies!" the tables are turned.[2] In this other successful comedy by Kaufman and Connelly, the clever young wife saves the day for the devoted, but conceited and not very able husband. A. A. Milne has pleased countless audiences

(1) Kaufman, G. S., and Connelly, Marc, Dulcy, New York, Putnam, 1921.
(2) Kaufman, G. S., and Connelly, Marc, To the Ladies!, New York, French, 1924.

with his comedy of married life, "Mr. Pim Passes By."[1] Mr. Pim is absent-minded in his old age, and nearly wrecks the happiness of a happy husband and wife on whom he chances to call. He remembers the right name in time to avoid disaster, however, and the charming couple resume their happy way. Here again we have the cheerful portrayal of marriage. A. E. Thomas has written another play about married folk, entitled "Her Husband's Wife."[2] The hypochondriac wife chooses her best friend to be her husband's wife in the event of her death. Finally, she decides to live and remain with her husband. A less dignified yet wholesome portrayal of married life is given in Mrs. Addis's, "Mrs. Pat and the Law."[3] Pat mistreats his wife when he is intoxicated, but is so good to her when he is sober that she drives the police officer away and gives Pat enough money for carfare to look for a job. How a faithful husband is ruled by a loving but tearful wife is the essence of C. Haddon Chambers's English comedy, "The Tyranny of Tears."[4]

The above plays are but a few of the modern productions which base their theme upon some phase of married life; it would be quite futile to attempt to exhaust the list, but the above have been selected as representative and probably having more direct social implications than others which have not been included. A glance at the bibliography, compiled at the end of this thesis, will suggest many other dramas of this type.

(1) Milne, A. A., Mr. Pim Passes by, New York, Knopf, 1922.
(2) Thomas, A. E., Her Husband's Wife, New York, Doubleday, 1914.
(3) Addis, Mrs. Mary, Mrs. Pat and the Law, Boston, Baker, 1924.
(4) Chambers, C. Haddon, The Tyranny of Tears, Boston, Baker, 1902.

The Eternal Triangle

The eternal triangle, an expression so popularly used these days that it need not be explained or enclosed with quotation marks, is another common theme for the modern social drama. From a technical point of view, the eternal triangle lends itself to the theater adroitly because of its conflicts (the place of conflict in drama has been discussed earlier in this thesis). But this subject is a popular one for stage presentation chiefly because it is a conspicuous social problem of the day. Chandler says "Of all the world-old plots, however, none is so common as "The Eternal Triangle," involving the strife of two men for the wife of one of them or of two women for the husband of one of them."

In George Bernard Shaw's satire, "Candida,"[1] we have a new approach to the problem of the eternal triangle: here the woman is to choose between the two men, her choice to be guided by the man who most needs her. Morell, Candida's husband and a preacher, has been kind to a shy, nervous, and poetic lad by name of Marchbanks. Marchbanks has fallen in love with Candida, whom he insists has been unwisely wed to Morell. He considers Morell a blatant and insincere husband who overworks Candida; finally, he conceives the idea that he himself is Candida's worthy mate. He proceeds to tell Morell this conviction. The preacher accepts the news as a joke at first; then, he reprimands Marchbanks in flowery remarks; at last, he becomes angry at his youthful rival and shakes him vigorously. Marchbanks, physical weakling that he

(1) Shaw, George Bernard, Candida, New York, Brentano, 1913.

is, remains mentally unfrustrated. He tells Morell: "I'm not afraid of you; it's you who are afraid of me..... I'll fight your ideas. I'll rescue her from her slavery to them, You're driving me out of the house because you daren't let her choose between your ideas and mine."

This challenge quite amazes Morell. He had cancelled an appointment in order, that he might stay at home and not leave Marchbanks alone with his wife. Now, he decides to give the young poet a chance. Marchbanks, realizing that he has been put on honor, spends most of the evening in boring Candida by reading his verses to her. Finally, he is tempted to take advantage of the situation of their being alone, but Candida quells him by telling him: "I am not afraid, so long as it is your real self that speaks, and not a mere attitude."

Now, Marchbanks can only repeat Candida's name with deep feeling. He asks her: "Don't you feel that every time (that he mentions her name) is a prayer to you?"

To this, Candida adroitly answers: "Doesn't it make you happy to be able to pray? That happiness is the answer to your prayer. Do you want anything more?" Marchbanks answers: "No, I have come into heaven, where want is unknown."

Morell returns, finding Marchbanks kneeling before Candida. "Oh, Morell, let us both give her up!" Marchbanks exclaims; "Why should she have to choose between a wretched little nervous disease like me and a pig-headed parson like you?" Morell is quite astonished and asks who will take care of Candida, should they give her up.

It is at this point where Shaw projects his philosophy of woman through his characters: It is Candida who wishes someone to protect, not to be protected by anyone. She is amused at their proposition and says: "And, pray, my lords and masters, what have you to offer for my choice? I am up for auction; what do you bid, James?"

"I have nothing to offer you," replies Morell melodramatically, "but my strength for your defence, my honesty of purpose for your surety, my ability and industry for your livelihood, and my authority and position for your dignity. That is all it becomes a man to offer a woman."

"And you, Eugene?" inquires Candida, "what do you offer?"

"My weakness! my desolation! my heart's need!" responds the young poet.

"That's a good bid, Eugene," Candida says; "now I know how to make my choice." With a gasp of despair, Morell utters her name, and this gasp portrays his weakness and surrender. "I give myself to the weaker of the two." The self-complacent husband divines this to be a verdict in Marchbanks' favor, but the quick-witted Marchbanks realizes that Morell is the weaker of the two bidders.

Candida then proceeds to review the situation. "Ask James's mother and his three sisters what it costs to be saving James the trouble of doing anything but be strong and clever and happy. Ask me what it costs to be James's mother and three sisters and wife and mother to his three children all in one.... Ask the tradesmen who want

to worry James and spoil his beautiful sermons who it is that puts them off. When there is money to refuse, I refuse it; when there is money to give, he gives it. I build a castle of comfort and indulgence and love for him, and stand sentinel always to keep little vulgar cares out."

Her husband realizes the truth Candida has been saying. "It is all true, every word!" he confesses. "You are my wife, my mother, my sisters: you are the sum of all loving care to me." Marchbanks loses his infatuation for Candida when he contemplates being mothered and sistered by her, and he leaves them to their new happiness.

In Gabriele d'Annunzio's play, "Gioconda,"[1] the eternal triangle is developed around an artist, his wife, and his model. D'Annunzio sets forth that the artistic temperament should not be bound by conventional ideas of marriage. He must be inspired by love, whether it be love of his wife or of some other woman. The artist, Lucio, finds his only inspiration in his model and mistress, Gioconda Dianti. He tries to commit suicide in order to escape the triangular situation, but his wife saves him. As she nurses him back to complete recovery, he promises her his undivided fidelity; but he can practice his art no longer, for his creative power has ceased since his putting Gioconda from his life. At this critical moment, Gioconda notifies him that she will meet him at his studio at a certain time each day. His wife fears that another meeting of his lover might break down his will; so she goes to the studio to meet Gioconda. The women meet, but Gioconda refuses to leave the

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(1) Annunzio, Gabriele d', Gioconda, Dickinson, New York, Houghton, Mifflin, Company, 1915, vol 2.

studio until she sees Lucio. Gioconda becomes infuriated and attempts to destroy the masterpiece upon which Lucio had been working. The wife rushes forward and saves the statue at the sacrifice of her hands. As she screams in pain, Gioconda flees.

In the course of time, Lucio again pledges his loyalty to his wife, who says: "I am not beautiful, I am not worthy of your eyes; but my love is wonderful.... it can work miracles; it shall give you all that you ask."

Lucio is weak in moral stamina; according to d'Annunzio, this is due to the fact that an artist is bound to follow his inspiration. When it is suggested to Lucio that it is his wife's noble character and soul that keeps him faithful to her, he replies: "Goodness! Goodness! Do you think, then, that light most comes from goodness and not from that profound instinct which hurries my spirit toward the most glorious images of life? I was born to make statues. When a material form has gone out of my hands with the imprint of beauty, the office assigned to me by nature is fulfilled. I have not exceeded my own law, whether or not I have exceeded the laws of right."

Gioconda has thought more of Lucio's art than his person. She said: "Household affections have no place here (in his studio); domestic virtues have no sanctuary here. This is a place outside laws and beyond common rights. Here a sculptor makes his statues.... Nature has sent me to him to bring him a message, and to serve him. I obey."

Ibsen, however, believes that art is inferior to life. In his

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(1) Chandler, Frank W., Aspects of Modern Drama, New York, MacMillan, 1924, p. 110.

play, "When We Dead Awaken," Ibsen builds his theme around the sculptor, Rubek, his wife, Maia, and his model, Irene. Rubek had loved Irene, but suppressed his ardor because he deemed art as the supreme consideration; the model should only be a means toward effecting his masterpiece for which she was his model. But he lost his creative genius through suppressing love; his work now becomes sordid and bestial. He finally marries Maia, but they find themselves unsuited for each other. He meets Irene again, but she believes she is dead and thinks he is spiritually dead as well. Rubek still hopes they may awaken, however; and as they climb the heights together, they are buried by an avalanche. Maia takes up with a wild bear-hunter, and she rejoices in her newly found freedom. It is nevertheless a freedom based on instinct, quite unlike the aesthetic and spiritual freedom which Rubek and Irene have achieved in their death together.

The moral implications of "When We Dead Awaken" are somewhat blurred by the symbolism employed; yet the play offers a solution for the eternal triangle problem as found in bohemian circles. The gist of Ibsen's attitude is "You must love for life's sake:" in d'Annunzio's play, however, the attitude is "You must love for art's sake." Chandler says: "D'Annunzio's unmoral attitude toward art is assumed by Shaw, as well, in "The Doctor's Dilemma," when Louis Dubedat, the shifty bohemian, declares before dying that in his own world he has never done anything wrong, for the laws that have governed there are not ethical but artistic."[1]

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(1) Chandler, Frank, W., Aspects of Modern Drama, New York, MacMillan, 1924, p. 111.

The eternal triangle has been treated by many other modern playwrights. Stanley Houghton has presented "Fancy Free,"[1] a clever satire on the eternal triangle theme. The husband is a philanderer, the wife in the case is a flirt; they run off with newer loves, but are brought together again. Paul E. Hervieu has made a protest against hasty judgments and divorces in his "Know Thyself"[2] a drama in which two triangles are adroitly sustained throughout the play. Shaw deals with the problem in his usual satirical vein in "How He Lied to Her Husband."[3] In this play, the husband resents the poet-lover's insensibility to his lady's charm, but is gratified by the poems. Sudermann's "Happiness in a Corner" gives a sensible and logical treatment of the problem of the eternal triangle. Life and happiness, the play teaches, are not always matters of passion gratified and of high ambitions fulfilled, but rather of duties done in quiet. Life consists in making renunciations as well as being self-assertive, and he who is ready to renounce may win from him who blusters. To make a concluding remark in connection with this problem of society in which two men seek the right to one woman, or two women to one man, Shaw's "Candida" seems to be the sanest and most commendable solution offered by the modern theater. It raises the problem above the melodramatic and sordid treatment so frequently offered by modern drama. "Candida" is unusual in that there is no elopement, no murder, no suicide, no duel, no divorce. What a refreshing outcome this Shavian play presents to those interested in the moral aspects of our theater today!

(1) Houghton, Stanley, Fancy Free, London, Sidgwick, 1912.
(2) Hervieu, Paul E., Know Thyself, Dickinson, Houghton Mifflin, vol. 1.
(3) Shaw, George Bernard, How He Lied to Her Husband, New York, Brentano, 1913.

Feminism.

That "a woman's place is in her home" is no longer a trite truism; it is a matter of growing controversy. Society is discussing the rights of women, their emergence into the realms of business, and professions, and politics. So the theater has taken up the theme and has presented many and varied attitudes and solutions.

It is quite natural that we should first turn to Ibsen, the father of the modern social drama, to learn his point of view. We have already discussed his attitude in part, and we have intimated that we would treat the problem as presented in his "Doll's House." Ibsen is an individualist, a firm believer in the individual rights of everyone; so he is quite in favor of the cause of feminism and advocates it in many of his plays.

The doll in "A Doll's House"[1] is Nora Helmer, a light-hearted and even frivolous little wife who believes that her husband, a banker, is infallible in every respect. She is content to allow him to rule her life completely. He takes ill, and the attending physician advises him to go south. Nora forges her father's name - her father is dying, and she reasons she should not bother him to do that which he willingly would do if able - and takes her husband south on the money thus obtained. She does not realize the seriousness of her action until Krogstad, the man who provided her with the money in exchange for the forged paper, takes advantage of her to coerce her to intercede with her husband. Krogstad insists that Nora must help him get on at her husband's bank. Nora borrows money from Doctor Rank, a friend of the family, until he makes known his

(1) Ibsen, Henrik, A Doll's House, New York, Scribner's, 1889.

love to her. When worse comes to worse, Nora reasons, Helmer will take the responsibility of the crime. But when Helmer does learn the truth, he makes no allowance for her inexperience and noble intent in borrowing the money; he criticizes her harshly for having disgraced his name just at a time when he gained prominence. He tells her she is not fit to rear their children. Nora then realizes that their marriage has been a sham, a lie. When Helmer pompously forgives her after danger is over, she realizes the more keenly that they cannot resume relationship on the former basis. She decides it is her duty to leave both him and her children; she must go away and learn to be herself before she can assume the responsibilities of life.

We have already showed Ibsen's revolt against conventional marriage and morality in "Ghosts,"[1] but it may be well to reiterate the feministic emphasis of the play. The ideal of the sanctity of marriage as an institution, the ideal that in part urged Manders to send Mrs. Alving back to her degenerate and brutish husband, is very cleverly satirized by portraying the tragic and horrible consequences For Mrs. Alving has been sent back only to live a lie and to become the mother of a child which must bear the father's curse. Ibsen advocates freedom rather than servile obedience to false standards of marriage. Woman has an equal right to freedom.

"The Famous Mrs. Fair"[2] has been a recent play which argues against the type of feminism which finds women in public affairs when they should give attention to their family. Mrs. Fair has been much in public limelight as a result of her activities during the War. She

(1) Ibsen, Henrik, Ghosts, London, Camelot series, no date.
(2) Forbes, James, The Famous Mrs. Fair, New York, Brentano, 1920

neglected the family in her complete engrossment with the public and philanthropic interests which she considered of greater importance. At a propitious moment - just when the family's welfare hangs in a critical balance, she realizes her first duty is to her husband and children. Accordingly, she forsakes her public career to assume the responsibilities of her home and family. The play is a convincing attack on the kind of feminism which obscures the duties of mother and wife.

"Ann Vroome,"[1] produced by Lewis Beach,[2] presents another phase of the plea for woman's freedom. Ann Vroome and Boyd Holliday have been engaged to each other for some time, and they longingly anticipate the days when they can be married. Ann hesitates to leave her aged parents, and their marriage is postponed from time to time. Finally, almost all hope is lost when her sister Martha moves away from the homestead; this change leaves her father and mother alone, and Ann is compelled to sacrifice her happy dreams. Boyd insists that her first duty is to herself and to him, not to her parents. "What about your duty to yourself, to me?" he asks. "They've taken advantage of your sweetness. But you owe me something, Ann. You've made me love you, and now you want to - " Ann portrays her emotions by replying: "'Want to'! Boyd, you're torturing me! Can't you see? You're going away, and I'll be all alone with -"..... I can't go; my place is here. We'd

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(1) Beach, Lewis, Ann Vroome, Boston, Little, Brown, 1924.
(2) Beach is a professor at Columbia University who has very happily combined his interests in drama and sociology. His best-known play is "The Goose Hangs High."

not be happy with that thought over me all the time." The result is that Boyd leaves town, implacated and disappointed. Ann stoically sets herself to the disagreeable task of caring for her old parents, who are none too kindly and tolerant in their senile years. The sordidness and homeliness of their declining years, the pettiness of their outlook, their obstinate refusal to appreciate the attitude of faithful Ann; all this is impressed upon the audience as the play progresses. Indeed, one does not need to wait until the last curtain falls to realize that the young woman's rights have been imposed upon and that she should have freed herself from the ungrateful parents. When Ann discovers that Boyd has grown tired waiting for her and about to be married to another, the drama makes its final blow against the tyranny of convention, its final plea for an appreciation of this rightful claim in feminism.

Still another aspect of the feministic theme is presented in the farce of recent origin and success, "Enter Madame,"[1] by Varesi and Byrne. Madame is a prima donna, internationally known for her fiery temperament as well as for her theatrical ability. The lure of the footlights has quite estranged her from her demure husband and now full-grown son. When Madame "enters" her home for the first time after a prolonged tour, she finds its atmosphere and interests foreign and beyond her. Through the farcical situations which ensue, one catches the striking lesson that Madame's success should be spelled failure: she has failed in her paramount

(1) Varesi, Gilda, and Byrne, Dolly, Enter Madame, New York, Brentano, 1921.

duty and mission in life, to be a wife and mother. The farce points out the danger of unbalanced feminism, which converts woman's freedom into woman's license.

The treatments of feminism in the modern drama are many and varied, but there is a well-defined tendency to increase recognition of the fact that woman has rights, and that chief among these rights is freedom from enslaving and tyrannical conventions of domestic, economic, and political life.

Divorce.

The problem of divorce is so closely allied to these other problems of family life that it is difficult to avoid overlapping. Yet there is a distinct field in modern drama from which we may select examples and by which we may judge what the theater of today is saying and influencing in this increasing menace of divorce. In harmony with the theory that the drama reflects the current problems and thoughts of people, comes this reliable statement from Chandler: "The problem of divorce is increasingly prominent in the recent drama."[1] Later on, he comments pithily: "When to unmarry is as much a question as when to marry."[2]

Ibsen urges the emancipating of women from marriage, if marriage has become a shackle; throughout his plays runs his endorsement of separation and divorce in all cases where there is marital ill-adjustment and friction. "Ghosts" is probably his most emphatic argument for separation when circumstances

(1) Chandler, Frank W., Aspects of Modern Drama, p. 192.
(2) Ibid.

are inharmonious in marital relations. There has been a shifting of emphasis since Ibsen's time, however, and of this shifting Chandler has tersely written:

"But since the days of Ibsen when he thus asserted the duty of divorce the drift of the modern drama in this regard has noticeably altered. During the past decade the influence of serious playwrights has rather been thrown into the scale opposing separation in marriage. One reason for this may be the fact that to urge divorce would seem a task of supererogation, so greatly has the thing itself increased. What is needed on the stage for novelty, if not for moral effect, is a lesson of mutual forbearance in marriage. As actual separations have been multiplying, dramatists have insisted that divorce is only a last resort. Some have urged chiefly that men and women should forgive; others have sought to show the futility of divorce or its horrors. In both cases there is a definite reaction against the individualism in marriage early advocated by Ibsen, and expressed by him even in his last play - 'When We Dead Awaken.'"

It would be quite unfair to minimize the moral and social urge which stirs many dramatists to express their ideas through the plays they produce. It is hard to believe that novelty, and not moral or social concern, is the controlling motive in the playwright's mind.

Brieux has probably written more plays treating the problem of divorce than has any one other dramatist, except Ibsen. Brieux stands firmly against divorce, and his dramas reflect a very serious purpose to suggest substitutes for breaking up the home. But Brieux admits through his plays that there are some conditions which not only make divorce legitimate but decidedly desirable. In his "The Deserter," he portrays a woman who is infatuated with a musician and finally runs off with him, leaving a young daughter and rather colorless husband at home. The father later marries the daughter's nurse, partly because he believes he is helping the child. The deserting mother is penitent after a time and returns to the home. The child, in the meantime,

(1) Chandler, Frank W., Aspects of Modern Drama, pp.193-194.

grew to dislike the nurse, though the latter continued to be kind and even held the child's mother up to her in high esteem. Nevertheless, when the mother returned, the child immediately clung to her, thereby increasing the problem of the two wives.

Brieux teaches that divorce sometimes merely augments the real difficulties, and one of his best lessons is to be found in "Damaged Goods."[1] A man marries in spite of his doctor's admonitions that marriage will only criminally spread a loathsome disease. The young wife does not learn the husband's secret until after the child has been endangered. The wife then considers a suit for divorce, having been urged to action by her father. The father asks the doctor for a written statement as to the husband's real condition, but the latter refuses. He insists that divorce will only serve to increase the unhappiness of all, since the disease will become known to all their friends through court proceedings. The best way out, the doctor argues, is not divorce, but is forgiving and making the best of the bad situation. Moreover, he insists that the husband is not alone to be blamed; the father should have inquired into his physical condition as well as having meticulously investigated his financial condition, the latter of which was done with alacrity at the outset. Brieux moralizes still further in the play by pointing out that the young husband is really no worse than the wife's father; both had been guilty, but only the

(1) Brieux, Eugene, Damaged Goods, Paris, Stock, 1921.

husband had to suffer for his sin in the eyes of society. The husband was therefore entitled to compassion and help from the father, especially since a cure could eventually be effected.

Brieux's "The Three Daughters of M. Dupont"[1] has been epitomized on preceding pages, but it may well be reiterated in this connection that the matter of divorce was advocated or averted by the parents purely on a mercenary basis, a situation which gave Brieux a subtle opportunity to show the inadequacy and foolishness of divorce. Julie's father urges her to secure a divorce, so that the dowry will lawfully fall to him. Antonin's mother, on the other hand, prevails upon her son not to grant the divorce, or she will lose the dowry.

In Strindberg's "The Father"[2] there is also a direct implication as to the divorce problem. As we have already stated in an earlier section, the parents would have long since obtained a divorce were it not for the sake of their child who constrains them. Strindberg projects a subtle argument against divorce through the situation developed.

Then, this playwright has made a still more poignant preachment against divorce in his "The Link." The couple, an old baron and his younger wife, go to a young judge for separation by law. While waiting for their hearing, they see an injustice done to other people by the young judge, and subsequently are done an injustice. The judge incites them to testify bitterly against

(1) See pages 13-14 above.
(2) See pages 14-15 above.

against each other. Their child is a link which keeps them from laying each other open to perjury. The baron summarizes the situation: "We have laid our disgrace open to all who take pleasure in our ruin. . . Hereafter, our child will never be able to speak of his parents as respectable people; . . . he will see the home shunned, his parents isolated and despised, and the time must come when he will flee us." The court rules that the child must be taken from them to be placed under the guardianship of two ignorant and undesirable jurymen. With this master stroke, Strindberg drives home the lesson that divorce causes more troubles than it cures.

Hervieu depicts the bondage of unhappily married people in his play, "In Chains" ("Les Tenailles"). The wife asks divorce from her husband and is refused; later, the husband seeks divorce from his wife, and he in turn is refused. They are both held fast to the same chain of servitude.

Parents and Children.

There is a frank treatment of the problems of relationships and adjustments between parents and children exhibited in a great many dramas of the day. This spirit of candor is not restricted to the stage, however; it is current in actual life. One of the major social problems of the hour is in the proper adjustment and correlation of youth. Merely to mention the fact that almost every large country in the world today has a "youth movement" astir within it, indicates that the younger generation must be reckoned with. The theater has caught this

note and has reflected it in a number of recent stage successes. Youth today is demanding a frank discussion and education in matters of sex; prudery and ignorance have no place in this once-taboo subject. Wedekind approved the plea for sex education by dramatizing his arguments in "The Awakening of Spring" ("Fruhlings Erwachen"). Many have frowned upon Wedekind because he has so relentlessly presented morbid themes across the footlights. In "The Awakening of Spring" he has admirably caught the child and adolescent mind and showed the tragic results which can follow ignorance of the vital matter of sex. But the playwright has a more specific motive in presenting the tragedy: his native country of Germany has the unhappy distinction of being the land of child suicides. Many hundred of children are reported each year to have committed suicide, and almost invariably life is taken at the age of puberty.

Moritz and Melchior are two boys at school. They are just facing that critical period of puberty. They talk to one another of their first impulses of sex; haltingly at first, and later with full confidence. The whole matter is one of mystery, and they make various speculations.

A group of girls pass by one day, and among them is Wendla, lately promoted to long frocks (because short ones at her age are not proper, her parents had ambiguously explained). The girls are also fascinated by the new mystery, and ask each other what it means to be married, and if boy babies are nicer than girl babies.

(1) Wedekind, Frank, The Awakening of Spring, (Philadelphia, Ziegler, 1909).

Melchior and Wendla chance to meet one day in the woods. Wendla entices him to romp with her, and subsequently ~~to~~ half-playfully to strike her. Shortly after this experience, a baby is borne in her married sister's home, and Wendla coaxes her mother to explain how it came. The mother evades the issue by repeating empty phrases which do not satisfy the child's curiosity at all.

Melchior and Wendla meet again, and this time a sudden storm forces them to take refuge together in a hayloft. The fascinating, unknown instinct drives them to one another. Wendla has no feeling of guilt or shame; indeed, she is triumphantly happy. She longs to tell others about their new experience. Now, at last, she knows.

Moritz, the duller of the two boys, sits alone in the woods, brooding. This new mystery is too serious to him; he cannot take it so light-heartedly as have Melchior and Wendla. It is ugly to him. Moreover, no one has taken an interest in him about it. A loose young woman, an artist's model, passes by the woods; she stops and tells him about her life. She begins to make love to him, and Moritz sees he could have her for the asking. He sends her away, and shoots himself.

The inquest is held, and the school-masters serve as judges. Moritz's father displays a drawing which he had found in Moritz's papers, a drawing by Melchior. It is a graphical explanation of the physiology of sex. The judges declare this drawing is the cause of Moritz's suicide. Melchior tries to speak in his own defense, but his superiors silence his every effort. The judges refer to "Moral insanity," and the lad is sentenced to a reformatory. He finds no peace or help there, and he is shocked at the inmates who are unashamed

in their immorality and corruptness. Wendla dies in giving birth to a child. As she passes away, she cries to her mother: "Oh, mother, why didn't you tell me everything?" The reply is the crux of Wedekind's message: "My mother told me no more." Melchior escapes from the reformatory one night and runs to the graveyard. As he surveys the two tombstones of his schoolmate's, he feels himself their murderer and yet repeats: "I am not bad; I was not bad."

Lewis Beach has interpreted the younger mind in a more genial drama, "The Goose Hangs High."[1] Here the welfare of a family hangs very critically upon the decisions of the children; their loyalty to the old home is brought to a severe test. Granny insists that the children are spoiled and pampered by the sacrificing parents. "Wanting and getting mean the same thing in this house. Oh, their goose hangs high!" When the father loses his position - resigning from it to protect his honor - the children prove their love and loyalty to their parents in a most whole-hearted, if not discreet, manner. "Oh, Mother, don't you see?" exclaims Mrs. Ingals to Granny. "It isn't the little things that reveal character. They'd seemed hard, indifferent. That's the outer spirit of the time. But if deep inside there's truth, who are we to criticize? Maybe they're finer. I believe they are. They're most honest and unafraid."

Likewise, in his "A Square Peg,"[2] Beach has presented the problem of relationship between parents and children. Rena Huckins is a very ambitious wife of a demure husband and two awed children.

(1) Beach, Lewis, The Goose Hangs High, (Boston, Little, 1924).
(2) Beach, Lewis, A Square Peg, (Boston, Little, 1924).

The mother has no appreciation for the point of view of the children, and a nagging grandmother adds to the friction. The mother not only rules her home, but she is the moving power in the social and civic organizations of the town. She manages all with a regal autocracy. Mildred, the young school-teaching daughter, characterized the situation in a comment to her brother Eugene: "It seems that Mother has made all our plans for us so long that we haven't the strength to act for ourselves, that we're afraid to." The mother has doomed the girl to school teaching, advising her: ". . . You'll be much better off, teaching school and living at home, than married. . . This idea that girls have that marriage is the be-all and end-all is tommy-rot. There are lots worse things than being an old maid. You're independent, free to come and go as you will, you're - ." But Mildred interrupts her mother. The only considerate thing the mother has done for Eugene has been to send him to college. He tells Mildred: "That was the one real thing Mother did for me - sending me to college. And why did she send me? Pride. But she didn't know what she was doing, that her despotism would make it impossible for me to appreciate freedom when it came suddenly. Whenever I wanted to do anything at home, I had to sneak. I used to go to bed, then crawl out of the window. But in Ann Arbor I had liberty, I was free. Oh, my God, for four moths there wasn't a night - and then one morning I went to class drunk. (Smiles cynically). Had on a borrowed dinner coat. That settled it. But I got hold of the letter from the Dean to

the folks. Mother's never found out."

The two children finally escape the mother's iron hand. Eugene joins the navy to be gone for three years. "When the three years are over," he says, "the string which tied me to this house will be broken." Mildred marries Lyman McVey, whom she has long loved but whom her mother had succeeded in estranging. The father escapes it all by suicide.

"Milestones," and English drama by Bennett and Knoblock, presents vividly the march of ideas from one generation to another, and how the point of view becomes more conservative as the milestones increase.

Hervieu has well depicted the chain of self-sacrfice made by one generation for each succeeding one. The parents sacrifice for the children, who in turn sacrifice for the next generation. Thus,"The Passing of the Torch" (the joy of life) is unbroken from one age to the next.

MacKaye's American comedy, "Mater," gives a happy portrayal of a mother who keeps young and who understands the younger generation. She helps her son win a political election and her daughter to marry the man she loves.

Probably the favorite play of this type is Barrie's "Alice-Sit-by-the-Fire." Alice is a lively, popular mother, who returns from India, wins the love and comradeship of her children, and feigns to step aside in the interests of her romantic daughter. Again, there is the optimistic note that the older and younger generation can travel hand in hand.

CHAPTER TWO

PROBLEMS IN ECONOMIC AND INDUSTRIAL LIFE

The Conflict between Capital and Labor.

The struggle between these two general classes of society has taken on many forms in modern drama. The relationship between the rich and poor has usually been dramatized in industrial situations, but the struggle has not been limited to this one phase; it has frequently involved law, philanthropy, and the professions versus business. Furthermore, there has been the American problem of the middle-class, who are neither poor nor rich, presented in recent years.

Hauptmann's drama, "The Weavers," ("Die Weber") is a classic portrayal of the down-trodden poor and their attempt to secure industrial freedom. Chandler says: " 'The Weavers' deals with the eternal conflict between capital and labor, but shows this conflict in a small corner at a particular moment."[1] Yet from a specific conflict, Hauptmann has drawn general and universal situations. The wretched want of the laborers are pictured with keenest pathos and unrelieved gloom; hungry eyes, bowed necks, and emaciated faces tell their own story in the play. The setting of the drama is based on the rebellion of the poverty-stricken flax-spinners of Silesia in 1844; the laborers rise in vain against the manufacturers whose selfishness was placing them in dire want. The starving spinners rise at the instigation of a young soldier, who has recently returned from military service. They invade the house of Dreissiger, their oppressor, but are futile in their efforts to better conditions. While the plot of the play is simple, the scenes accomplish the purpose of the

(1) Chandler, Frank W., Aspects of Modern Drama, p. 38.

playwright by depicting the widespread, hopeless misery of the laborers, their struggles, and the futility of their hopes. No hero or spokesman is employed in the play, except the abstract one in the form of the hunger of the masses. The weavers are to be considered as any group of workers; the revolt of 1844 is to be interpreted as any industrial revolt. Hauptmann's paternal grandfather was a weaver; this fact probably influenced him to choose this group as representative of the typical conditions existing among the poor.

Galsworthy's "Strife"[1] is another widely-known drama of industrial revolt. The laborers of the Trenartha Tin Plate Works have been on strike for some time. The directors of the company have come down to negotiate with the workers, who have long been urging their demands but, as yet, in vain. They have in Roberts a capable and persevering leader. Roberts has been cheated in an invention which the company has used to profitable advantage. The capitalists' leader is old John Anthony, whose genius has developed the company until it has now reached a successful state. Anthony has stood out against four previous revolts of the workers, and he is determined not to give in now. A series of conferences are held in which Roberts insistently proclaims the rights of the workers, but Anthony resists the claims stubbornly. A union official acts as intercessor, hoping to arbitrate and thus bring glory to his own cause.

Most of the directors are now willing to make concessions; the strike has already been a great loss to their firm. Anthony refuses.

(1) Galsworthy, John, Strife, (London, Duckworth, 1910).

On the other hand, most of the workers are willing to make some concessions, for they are in dire need. Roberts refuses just as grimly as does Anthony. The two factions remain unreconciled until Roberts's wife has died. The misery and starvation has affected the women and children, and Roberts's wife falls ill and dies from under-nourishment. She died rather than to take food from Anthony's daughter, to whom she had been a maid before marrying Roberts. While Roberts is at home in grief, the conference places the matter in the hands of the union leader for adjustment. The action has been done in spite of Anthony's protests, and he immediately resigns, feeling forever disgraced for having lost the stand. When Roberts returns to the meeting and learns what has taken place, that his wife has died in vain. The union leader sizes up the situation by commenting: "A woman dead, and the two best men both broken!" Thereupon, the secretary of the board says: "Yes, nothing has been gained. Do you know, sir - these terms, they're the very same as we drew up together, you and I, and put to both sides before the fight began? All this - all this - and - and what for?"

Finished artist that he is, Galsworthy takes no sides in the strife, nor does he suggest any solutions. But he does allow each side to present its case freely. Anthony declares that masters and men cannot be equals. "Masters are masters, men are men!" he exclaims. "Yield one demand, and they'll make six . . . If I were in their place, I should be the same. But I'm not in their place."

Likewise, Roberts declares with equal earnestness that he will fight against Capital - "A thing that buys the sweat o' men's brows, and the torture o' their brains, at its own price . . . 'Tis not for this little moment of time that we're fighting, not for ourselves . . . 'tis for all those that come after throughout all time. Oh! men - for the love o' them, don't roll up another stone upon their heads . . . They're welcome to the worst that can happen to me, to the worst that can happen to all of us . . . if we can shake that white-faced monster with bloody lips, that has sucked the life out of ourselves, our wives and children, since the world began."

A third drama which presents this conflict between labor and capital is Bergstrom's "Lynggaard and Company." There is impartial portrayal of the idle dilettante, the impractical socialist, the improvident philanthropist, and the scheming but efficient manager. This time the scene is laid among the Danish workers and capitalists.

The distinctions made between the rich and poor in the courts is the theme of Galsworthy's "The Silver Box." It is an indictment against the society which has "One law for the rich and another for the poor." In a social crisis, the common man is helpless. In the plot of "The Silver Box," it is shown that a rich fool and a laborer commit the same offense against the law. The rich man is protected from legal punishment by his father's money, but the laborer is brought into court, reprimanded by the judge, and sent

to prison. During the trial, the young rich man saves himself by lying, with the aid of his lawyer and father, a member of parliament. The labor tells the truth, and must take the consequences. The accused man cries out in indignation: "Call this justice? What about 'im? 'E got drunk! 'E took the purse . . . but it's 'is money got 'im off - justice!"

Galsworthy's more elaborate drama, "Justice," follows much the same theme as "The Silver Box." Falder is a clerk in a lawyer's office. His sympathies are aroused by the pitiful condition of a woman married unhappily to a drunkard. He becomes crazed with anxiety over her safety and raises a check from nine to ninety pounds, money to rescue the miserable woman. But he is found out by his employers, is arrested, and brought to trial. He is sentences to three years imprisonment. The third act of the drama shows him in solitary confinement. He is given freedom at the end of the second year as a ticket-of-leave man, finds conditions against him in the world, and commits suicide.

Another aspect of the legal machine is shown in Brieux's "The Red Robe." (La Robe rouge). In this brilliant satire on the French system of criminal justice, each of the men of the law is depicted as a self-seeker. Regardless of justice, each one strives to gain popular recognition as a means of being promoted to the red robe of the magistrate. One of the aspiring lawyers explains to a poor woman:[1] "Justice is free, but the means

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(1) Brieux, Eugene, The Red Robe, (Brentano, New York, 1916) pp. 62-63.

of attaining it are not." Brieux shows that the only aquaintance a poor person has with justice is that which he gains in falling beneath its iron hand. The climax of the message of "The Red Robe" is effectively developed by the condemnation of Mouzon's deserted wife: "Yes, see your work, yours, you bad judges! Of an innocent man, you have well nigh made a convict, and of an honest woman, a mother, you have made a criminal!"

A curious fantasy is Capek's "R. U. R."[1] (Rossum's Universal Robots) which has had remarkable success on the American stage during the past few years. It is an Hungarian satire on our modern industrial order in which there seems to be the ambition to reduce everything to a mechanism. The Robots are manufactured men who are made by the thousands to perform the labor of the world. As workers, these Robots are a decided success; they labor unceasingly and untiringly. But they do not have souls; they cannot appreciate the higher and finer things of life. Moreover, the real men do not know how to appreciate such things, even with this leisure they have gained. The Robots learn they are mightier than the men and engage in a war upon them. The helplessness of the men when pursued by their mechanical but soulless workers is portrayed in typical Frankensteinian style. The play is a strong indictment against this industrial age in which we live.

Broadhurst has produced a rather flimsy but popular social

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(1) Capek, Karl, "R. U. R." (New York: French, 1916).

drama, "The Man and the Hour,"[1] depicting corruption in politics in a glaring manner. The play deals specifically with the unscrupulous politicians, bosses, and the general graft which abounds in New York City. The action is furnished by a boss-elected mayor who refuses to sign a franchise bill.

In Kenyon's play, "Kindling,"[2] we have a presentation of the bad conditions obtaining in the tenement districts of New York City. A young wife steals for her baby's sake, planning to purchase freedom from the squalor by going to Wyoming. The action of the drama is not brilliant, but the atmosphere and setting are effective in showing the miserable environment of the tenement row.

"Beggar on Horseback"[3] is an exaggerated and distorted fantasy, produced by Kaufman and Connelly, which parades modern materialism, big business, and life among the idle rich in a grotesque and cheerfully indicting fashion.

Galsworthy has showed the failure of professionalized charity, which governs itself by law rather than by letter, in "The Pigeons."[4] He is quite unfair to the Salvation Army in this play, but he gives a very engaging picture of a typical philanthropic captain of industry. He criticizes those who accept charity from him, but who condemn his morals behind his back. It is the understanding spirit that counts in philanthropy; this is the essence of the drama.

(1) Broadhurst, G. H., The Man and the Hour, (New York, Brentano)
(2) Kenyon, Charles, Kindling, (New York, Scribner's, 1917).
(3) Kaufman & Connelly, Beggars on Horseback, (Boni, 1924).
(4) Galsworthy, John, The Pigeons, (New York, Scribner's, 1912).

Within the last few years there has developed in the theater a new theme of social consideration, the problem of the middle-class people of our country. Probably the most successful plays of this nature is Ann Nichols's comedy, "White Collars." The characterization in the play is impelling and true to life. One is impressed with the cotton-stocking poverty of the wholesome, but slaving, family which is depicted. There is a pathetic note of ambitions thwarted, longings suppressed, and hopes dimmed by the tread-mill existence of the twenty-five dollar-a-week household. Both the young daughter and the young son hope to marry, but they realize they are restricted; they do not have the education and social standing to expect very much in the way of romance. The father and mother patiently toil day by day, ever striving to make appearances respectable and to keep the home intact. The play ends happily, in typical American style, but the ending does not detract from the earlier scenes and portrayal of conditions - conditions under which "the G. M. C. (The Great Middle-Class)"must live.

George Kelly's play, "The Show-Off," is another presentation of the problems of the middle-class. The "Show-Off" -"the kid from West Philly"- is a braggart with a millionaire's mein and an irritating personality. Yet he wins our sympathy, in spite of his vexing nature, because he appeals to our own desire to attain the unattainable. The problem of a young couple trying to live on a small salary is again presented.

(1) Nichols, Ann, White Collars, (New York, Brentano, 1925).
(2) Kelly, George E., White Collars, (Boston, Little, 1924).

The matter of race barrier and prejudice has entered into the industrial and economic world today that it is well to point out several prominent dramas which have the race problem as their dominant theme.

Of all race dramas, Zangwill's "The Melting Pot"[1] has been most consistently successful in the American theater. The problem surrounds a young Jewish musician who has fallen in love with a Christian girl. David Quixano, fearing death from the massacres of his native land, comes to America. He is busy composing a symphony which is to show by its strains that America is the Melting Pot for the racial prejudices of the Old World. He soon falls in love with the Christian girl, who proves to be the daughter of the Russian officer who was responsible for David's parent's death in Russia. The symphony is played to the New York masses on a Fourth of July, and it is triumphantly received. But David laments to Vera that he has been false to his own music: "I preached of God's crucible, this great new continent that could melt up all race-differences and vendettas, that could purge and recreate; and God tried me with this supreme test. He gave me a heritage from the Old World, hate and vengeance and blood, and said, 'Cast it all into My Crucible.' And I said, 'Even Thy Crucible cannot melt this hate, cannot drink up this blood.' " The two lovers are soon reconciled to each other, however, and David sees in the setting sun God's crucible: "Ah, what a stirring and seething! Celt and Latin, Slav and Teuton, Greek and Syrian, black and yellow, Jew and Gentile. . .

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(1) Zangwill, Israel, The Melting Pot, (New York, Boni, 1910).

how the great Alchemist melts and fuses them with his purging flame!"

Heijermanns has written a play much in common with "The Melting Pot" but inferior in artistry and construction. Again, we have the problem of the inter-marriage of Jew and Gentile. Heijermanns shows prejudice in assailing the Jews more severely than he does the Gentiles. All the characters of the drama are of the lower classes.

If Heijermanns errs in being too lenient in depicting the Christian attitude toward the Jew, Bernstein errs in being too harsh on the Christians in his play, "Israel." He makes the Christian too bigoted, probably a result of the unconscious influence of his own Jewish point of view. The drama is rather far-fetched, and provides a weak excuse for the basis of racial prejudices to work to tragedy.

Of more recent treatments of the Jew-Christian theme, Ann Nichols comedy, "Abie's Irish Rose," holds all records as a theatrical success. Indeed, its success has been phenomenal; it has run for months in all our leading cities. In a wholesome and genial manner, it shows that love can break down all barriers of race and creed; the Jewish husband and his Rabbi father and the Irish Catholic wife with her priest as friend finally come to the point where they can all eat pork on Friday, and all ends happily. The play is light, but appeals to the average theater-goer. All in all, its influence is good and uplifting.

The negro problem is emotionally depicted in Sheldon's drama, "The Nigger." A Southern Governor learns that he is the grandson of a negress. The lynch law, prohibition, and political disfranchisement are introduced in the play as parts of the negro question.

SUMMARY

The modern theater is a great sociological laboratory. Anyone interested in the commanding social problems of the day can well afford to turn to the theater, for this institution is giving itself largely to the presentation of such problems. The influence of the theater is powerful in these days when throngs file by the ticket-windows for every performance, day after day. The sociologist and social scientists should therefore be vitally concerned as to how the theater is disposing of these great problems. It is probably fortunate that the dramas usually present the problem; they ordinarily do not suggest the solution.

On the whole, the influence of the theater in these social questions is wholesome and helpful. The stage does remarkably well in its treatment of such themes - themes which lend themselves so easily to the risque and improper. Of course, many cheap plays burlesque the seriousness of the problems, and many resort to the unsavory and suggestive; but the great mass of dramas are pointing their endeavors in the right direction.

The several relationships between husband and wife are our first consideration. Ibsen is the father of this type of social drama.[1] His "Ghosts" insists that no woman should be bound to the tyranny of a brutish and unfit husband.[2] Pinero is also conspicuous as a social-theme dramatist. "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray" moralizes that a fallen woman cannot find happiness nor live down her past by re-marrying.[3]

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(1) See p. 7, above.
(2) See p. 8, above.
(3) See p. 9, above.

In his "Mid-Channels," Pinero shows that the childless home often leads to unhappiness and tragedy in middle life.[1] "The Profligate" portrays the power of a good woman to redeem a man.[2] Brieux is another prominent figure making social problems the basis of his plays. In "The Three Daughters of M. Dupont," he makes an effective attack on marriage of convenience.[3] Strindberg, in his "The Father," depicts the influence of a child in keeping parents from separating.[4] "Jane Clegg," by Ervine, shows the unhappiness a dissolute husband can cause; the play advocates separation under such conditions.[5] Shaw believes that marriage is meaningless without love. In his "Getting Married," he argues for marriage of inclination.[6] The problem of Marriage has also been treated in comic relief. "Dulcy" humorously presents a flapper, but devoted, wife, and how her good intentions prove almost fatal to her loving husband's business.[7] "To the Ladies" shows how a clever wife saves her husband from making blunders.[8] "Mr. Pim Passes By" and, in passing, restores harmony within a household which he had nearly wrecked through a mistake on his part. "Her Husband's Wife"[9] tells humorously of a hypochondriac wife who chose her best friend as her successor as her husband's mate; later, she decides to live and keep him herself. For the most part, marriage is treated with optimism and respect. The theater recognizes that monogamous marriage is the best kind, despite its weaknesses and failures from time to time.

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(1) See page 12, above.
(2) See page 13, above.
(3) See page 14, above.
(4) See page 15, above.
(5) Ibid.
(6) See page 17, above.
(7) See page 19, above.
(8) See page 20, above.
(9) Ibid.

The theater has also presented many aspects of the problem of the eternal triangle. It is a world-old plot, well adapted to the stage because of its elements of conflict. Shaw has presented the sanest treatment of any modern dramatist. In "Candida," he shows that the woman in the case should decide between the two men on the basis of who needs her the more.[1] D'Annunzio expresses his belief in "Gioconda" that the artistic temperament should not be restricted by conventional ideas concerning love and marriage. But convention must be observed, for tragedy has resulted in the drama.[2] Ibsen believes love is superior to art; his attitude is that one must love for life's sake, not for art's sake. In his play, "Happiness in a Corner," Sudermann gives a refreshing treatment of the eternal triangle. Life and happiness are not always found by gratifying one's passion or fulfilling one's ambitions, the play shows; duties done in quiet and obscurity usually bring the desired life and happiness.[3] The eternal triangle is occasionally treated on the stage in a flippant and sporting manner, it is true; but most of the dramas with this theme treat the problem as a serious one, one demanding rational solution.

Woman's freedom has been presented in many recent stage successes. "A Doll's House" is the fore-runner of this new freedom. Ibsen insists that woman should not be bound to slavery of conventional types, especially to domestic slavery.[4] "The Famous Mrs. Fair" teaches that woman should be free, but that she she should not forsake her duties to home and family.[5] New lives should not ruined for the sake of old ones; this is the thesis of Beach's drama,"Ann Vroome".

(1) See page 21, above.
(2) See page 24, above.
(3) See page 27, above.
(4) See page 29, above.
(5) Ibid.

The drama of today takes the attitude that unmarrying is becoming as serious a problem as marrying. On the whole, divorce is discouraged by the theater. Many plays show the danger of hasty conclusions about separating, and many more show that divorce give rise to more problems than it settles. As a general thing, the modern stage is doing commendable work in depicting the tragedy of broken homes. Brieux is the outstanding playwright who has argued against divorce. Most of his plays are given to this theme. "Damaged Goods" is perhaps his best indictment against divorcement.[1] Hervieu shows the tragic results of divorce upon the children concerned in his play, "The Link." As does Brieux, Hervieu points out the fact that divorce creates more trouble than it settles.[2]

Industrial and economic conditions are bases for a large number of modern dramas. The sympathies of these plays are generally with the laborer and the poorer group. "The Weavers" depicts the oppression by the capitalists, and wins the sympathies of the audience to the poor weavers.[3] Galsworthy takes no side in "Strife," but he presents in bold relief the unfairness of a system which permits a few to live in luxury and many to live in want.[4] Even the law courts make distinctions between the rich and the poor, and both Galsworthy and Brieux develop this theme. The semi-poverty of America's "Great Middle-Class" is a popular subject of the more recent dramas. Finally, the race question as related to industry and economic life has been treated by several playwrights. Tolerance

(1) See page 34, above.
(2) See page 35, above.
(3) See page 43, above.
(4) See page 46, above.

and universal good-will are urged by these dramas. Love is greater than creed and color, they insist.

The trend of the modern drama is toward more social themes, not fewer. The outlook is hopeful, for playwrights are taking increased interest in studying social conditions. The theaters are reaching thousands of people who will never be reached by text-books and treatises on sociology and by the churches. The influence of the stage, if directed properly, can accomplish untold good in educating and leading people to a better society.

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